estimation of haemoglobin at the National level was undertaken for the first time as part of the National Family Health Survey (NHFS-II) conducted in 1998-99. The findings show that only 22% had mild anaemia, 25% moderate anaemia and 2.5% has severe anaemia. 50.3% pregnant women did not suffer from anaemia.

(b) and (c) There is no proposal for distribution of fortified *atta* in place of wheat through Public Distribution System (PDS). The limited shelf life of *atta* as compared to that of wheat is one of the reasons for not encouraging such a proposal.

Malnutrition among children

3909. SHRI R. P. GOENKA : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the World Bank has drawn attention to the silent emergency in which half of all children under the age of four are mal-nourished, thirty per cent of newborn are under-weight and sixty per cent of women are anaemic;

(b) whether malnutrition has resulted in loss of productivity to the extent of Rs. 50,000 crores in a year; and

(c) the specific measures Government are taking to reduce the incidence of malnutrition?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA) : (a) The World Bank Report Publication forms a part of the Government of India World Bank collaboration in Nutrition which began in 1980. As per the report, half of all the children below four years are malnourished, 30% of newborn are under-weight and 60% women are anaemic.

As per the findings of National Family Health Survey-II conducted in 1998-99, about 47% of children below three are under-nourished. The Survey also reported that only 30% of babies were weighted, out of which one fifth were reported to below birth weight. The survey further reports that about half of the women in the reprodutive age group are anaemic. However, over the years a positive trend has been noticed in the country in most of the basic indicators of child health. There has been a steady fall in the infant mortality rate, the pre-natal mortality rate and the under five mortality rate. The prevalence of severe and moderate degree of malnutrition among children below four years has also come down.

(b) No such studies have been conducted by the Government to ascertain the lost of productivity due to malnutrition. As per the world Bank Report the estimated loss of productivity due to malnutrition is about 10 Billion US $.

(c) Under the RCH Programme of the Department of Family Welfare, adequate attention has been given to nutrition as per the following interventions for child health:

(1) Exclusive breast-feeding for six months.

(2) Timely introduction of complementary feeding.

(3) Detection and management of growth faltering.

(4) Prophylaxis programme to prevent blindness due to Vitamin A deficiency through Vitamin-A supplementation.

(5) Iron supplementation, if needed.

(6) Programme for prevention of specific micronutrient deficiency disorders such as Iodine deficiency disorder.

(7) Supplementary feeding programme by Department of Women and Child Development under the following schemes :—

(i) Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDSS).

(ii) National Programme of Nutritional support to primary education.

Hepatitis 'C'

3910. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Hepatitis 'C' has of late assumed alarming proportions and has started posing a major health hazard in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to address this problem which is defying timely detection and treatment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND